

Notice of Decision
Grazing Permit Renewals
United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Baker Resource Area
3165 10th Street, Baker City, Oregon 97814

Notice is hereby given that on August 28, 2001, Penelope Dunn Woods, Baker Resource Area Field Manager, Bureau of Land Management, issued a decision to authorize the renewal of six (6) grazing permits within Baker County, Oregon. This decision authorizes the renewal of these grazing permits for a 10-year period. New or additional mitigation requirements to authorize livestock grazing under each permit have been identified and will be incorporated into the terms and condition section of each grazing permit. Implementation of this action(s) may start as soon as the appeal/protest period is completed.

This decision is consistent with the BLM's 1989 Baker Resource Management Plan, the Standards For Rangeland Health (August, 1997) and is in accordance with 43CFR 4130.2. The grazing allotments associated with these permits are located within Townships 7 through 13, South, Range 40 through 44 East, of the Baker Resource Area and vary in size from 21 acres to 11,402 acres. A copy of the Decision Record may be obtained by writing to the Baker Resource Area, Bureau of Land Management, 3165 10th Street, Baker City, Oregon 97814 or by calling (541) 523-1438.

For a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this notice in the Baker City Herald, this decision shall be subject to protest and/or appeal (43 CFR Part 4). Interested parties may protest this decision by providing written comment or objections to the Baker Resource Area Field Manager, at the above Baker City address. Protests/appeals must be filed within the 30 day time period to be considered.

Dated: __August 28, 2001__ **Baker Resource Area Field Manager:** __/s/ Penelope Dunn Woods__

Environmental Assessment for
Grazing Lease #366105
Bunch Family Trust
EA #OR - 035-01-12

Bureau of Land Management
Vale District
Baker Resource Area

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**Environmental Assessment
For the Bunch Family Trust
Permit # 366105**

Introduction

This environmental assessment addresses lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Vale District. The lands are located within five different allotments, approximately 20 miles south Baker City, Oregon (see map). These five allotments are leased in part, to the Bunch Family Trust.

Proposed Action

The proposed action is to respond to an application to re-issue a ten-year grazing permit for the Bunch Family Trust.

The proposed action includes:

- ! Changes to the terms and conditions of the grazing permit where needed.
- ! Establishes grazing utilization standards necessary to meet (or start moving in that direction) the rangeland standard and guides.
- ! Continues or establishes a grazing season and active grazing preference for each grazing allotment under the Bunch Family Trust grazing permit.
- ! Continue certain management practices (such as salting) necessary to improve grazing distribution and minimize natural resource impacts.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of this EA is to re-issue a 10-year grazing permit for the Bunch Family Trust. The proposed action is needed to authorize continued livestock grazing use per direction contained in the Baker Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (1989) and pursuant to 43CFR 4130.2. This grazing permit authorizes the Bunch Family Trust to graze on five different allotments within the resource area. The allotments are identified in the following table.

Allotment Name	Allotment Number	Season of Use	Active Preference (AUMs)	Category*	Total BLM Acres
Hollowfield Canyon	#1030	6/22-8/21	42	M	301
Shirttail Creek	#1031	4/22-5/21 10/15-11/14	76	I	806
Pearce Gulch	#1065	10/1-12/31	6	C	63
Morgan Mtn	#1068	10/1-11/23	194	I	5,117

Sisley Creek	#1069	4/27-6/15 10/1-11/30	455	I	5,467
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*Category refers to: "I" = Improvement; "M" = Maintain; "C" = Custodial

Background

The Bunch Family Trust grazing permit, which authorizes livestock grazing within five cattle allotments administered by the BLM, was "renewed" under the authority pursuant to the provisions of section 123 of public law 106-113 (enacted on November 29, 1999). The renewal action authorized the Bunch Family Trust to graze their permitted livestock on BLM administered lands until their permit could be "renewed" through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. This grazing permit is subject to renewal at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior for a period of up to ten years. The BLM has authority to renew livestock grazing permits consistent with the provisions of the Taylor Grazing Act, Public Rangeland Improvement Act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, and the Baker Resource Management Plan Environmental Impact Statement (subsequently amended by the Oregon/Washington Standards and Guidelines for Rangeland Health).

Description of Alternatives

Two alternatives are analyzed in this EA: Alternative 1) No Action-No grazing (no reissuance of permit), and Alternative 2), Continue Present Grazing with modifications as needed to adhere to Rangeland Health Standards & Guides Assessment. Management goals consistent with multiple use objectives of livestock grazing, wildlife habitat, and watershed needs, as outlined by the Baker Resource Management Plan Record of Decision (ROD) 1989, and grazing strategies consistent with attaining the Fundamentals for Rangeland Health and the Standards for Rangeland Health (Appendix 1) are incorporated into grazing plans in Alternative 2. Terms and Conditions of this permit state: "This permit is subject to modifications as necessary to achieve compliance with the Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Management (43 CFR 4180)". The above allotments are scheduled for assessment in 2005 and 2007.

Alternative 1 - No Action

Under this alternative, the Bunch Family Trust grazing permit would not be reissued.

Alternative 2 - Proposed Action- Continue Current Grazing Plan

The proposed action is to issue grazing permit #366105 to Bunch Family Trust allotments totaling 773 AUMs on approximately 11,754 acres on five different BLM allotments. Under this alternative, management of these allotments will change based on the mitigation items identified in the mitigation section of this assessment. These mitigation measures are being implemented in order to comply with Rangeland Health Standards & Guides Assessment. For seasons of use, numbers and AUMs, refer to above table.

Description of Affected Environment and Environmental Impacts

Rangeland Soils

Four general soil types dominate within the five allotments. In general soils are classified as well drained, shallow and moderately deep to deep soils. They range from gravelly, stony and cobbly silt loams. These soils are classified mainly for livestock grazing (with slope being the main limitation), while providing for wildlife habitat.

Impacts to Rangeland Soils

Alternative 1 - Under this alternative any impacts to rangeland soils from livestock grazing would be eliminated.

Alternative 2 - Continuation of the grazing systems in place within the above allotments is not expected to change the nature of rangeland soils. Impacts to soils occurs mainly around water developments and within riparian areas and can be detrimental to soils causing compaction, and/or soil erosion. However adhering to utilization standards and moving livestock within a timely manner will minimize these impacts. Future Standards & Guides assessment will address needed changes to livestock management if the standard for soils/uplands is not met.

Water Resources

#1065 Pearce Gulch & #1030 Hollowfield Canyon

Water resources are limited on these two allotments, as BLM lands are mostly uplands with approximately .55 miles of perennial streams and .9 miles of intermittent streams. Data on water resources is lacking at this time.

#1068 Morgan Mountain

There are approximately 1.85 miles of perennial streams in this allotment. Proper Functioning Condition (PFC) assessment was completed on the following streams. Results are as follows:

Heiney Creek - non-functional (NF)

Deafy Creek - functioning at risk with a non-apparant trend (FARN)

Morgan Creek - functiong at risk with an upward trend (FARU)

The Heiney, Deafy and Morgan Creeks are tributaries to the Snake River which contains listed fish species. Other drainages are tributaries to the Burnt River. Both of these rivers are on the 303d list, (Snake River for temperature and toxins; Burnt River for flow modification and temperature). Downcutting and active head cutting were major contributors to the non-functioning and at risk calls made as a result of PFC assessments.

#1069 Sisley Creek

This allotment consists mostly of uplands with approximately 1.25 miles of perennial streams and several intermittent streams. The most significant stream within the allotment is Jordan Creek which was rated FARU in 1998.

#1031 Shirttail Creek

Approximately 2.2 miles of perennial streams in this allotment including .7miles of Shirttail Creek and the Burnt River. Portions of Shirttail creek is deeply entrenched and degraded with remnant woody vegetation present. Stream and water quality data is lacking at this time.

Impacts to Water Resources

Alternative 1 - Under this alternative water resources are expected gradually improve over time. The no grazing alternative would alleviate water resource concerns from livestock grazing.

Alternative 2 -Continuation of grazing in these allotments will also allow water resources to gradually improve however could have adverse effects to water resources if livestock are not moved in a timely manner. Management systems allow for movement of livestock when utilization standards are met. Future Standards & Guides assessment will further intensify or change management if needed to improve water resource conditions.

Riparian Resources

Potential riparian vegetation in this watershed includes willows, cottonwood, hawthorne, elderberry, mock orange and chokecherry overstory, with grass species such as sedge species, kentucky bluegrass, bulbous bluegrass, blue wildrye, basin wildrye, and streambank wheatgrass.

#1065 Pearce Gulch , #1031 Shirttail Creek & #1030 Hollowfield Canyon

Information about riparian habitat in these three allotments is limited. Much of the BLM managed lands are uplands with few perennial and intermittent streams. The BLM segment on Shirttail Creek is in degraded condition. Standards and Guides assessment when completed will provide necessary information to further assess riparian condition.

#1068 Morgan Mountain

Perennial streams within the allotment that were assessed for PFC include Heiney Cr., Deafy Cr., and Morgan Cr. which were assessed as non-functioning, FARN and FARU respectively. Riparian habitat is lacking adequate residual vegetation and structural diversity for site potential on some sites. The riparian habitat in these three drainages is generally in early seral condition with respect to vegetation structure, species diversity, and recruitment. Noxious weed invasion is a concern within this allotment. More information is needed regarding riparian habitat. Scotch thistle is the dominant weed species in draw bottoms and benches above the creeks. Whitetop is increasing in several locations, primarily along the main access roads and especially those roads located in drainage bottoms. Standards and Guides Assessment will provide necessary information to further assess riparian conditions.

#1069 Sisley Creek

Riparian resources within this allotment include Jordan Cr. and Hogback Creek and several other perennial and intermittent streams. PFC rating in 1998 assessed Jordan Creek as FARU. Jordan Creek and Hogback creeks are capable of supporting a willow-cottonwood cover, but are in poor condition. Remnant cottonwood, peachleaf willow, and Mackenzie willows and other willows planted on these creeks receive heavy utilization each year. There is a lack of woody vegetation diversity and composition, and also downcutting is present.

Impacts to Riparian Resources

Alternative 1 - Riparian resources may improve more rapidly under this alternative.

Alternative 2 - Continuation of grazing in these allotments could inhibit recovery on degraded riparian resources if livestock are not moved in a timely manner. Management systems allow for movement of livestock when utilization standards are met. Future Standards & Guides assessment will further intensify or modify management as needed to improve riparian resource conditions.

Vegetation/Plant Communities

#1065 Pearce Gulch , #1031 Shirttail Creek & #1030 Hollowfield Canyon

Rangeland plant communities in these three allotments are dominated by Wyoming big sage brush/ bluebunch wheatgrass/Sandbergs bluegrass and Wyoming big sagebrush/Idaho fescue/bluebunch/Sandbergs bluegrass , with cheatgrass intermixed.

Information regarding the condition of these rangelands is lacking. Standards and Guides assessment will provide necessary information to further assess these rangelands.

#1068 Morgan Mountain & #1069 Sisley Creek

Rangeland plant communities in these allotments consist of Wyoming big sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass/Sandbergs bluegrass, Wyoming big sagebrush/Idaho fescue/Sandbergs bluegrass, and threepine sagebrush/bluebunch wheatgrass/ Sandbergs bluegrass with cheatgrass intermixed, and also some seeded areas of crested wheatgrass. Most of these upland communities are in mid to late seral stage in good condition with some of the lower slopes and benches dominated by cheatgrass and in poor condition. Both of these allotments have some upland sites infested with Scotch thistle and whitetop. These weed species are being treated as funds and time allow. Several small patches of black henbane have been treated for several years and are almost eradicated from the area at this time. Future assessments from Standards & Guides will provide further information on range condition of these plant communities.

Impacts to Vegetation/Plant Communities

Alternative 1 - There would be no impacts to vegetation from livestock grazing under this alternative.

Alternative 2 - Continuation of grazing in these allotments could impair reestablishment of perennials on those sites dominated by annual (cheatgrass), but is not expected to impact perennial bunchgrass plant communities. Future Standards & Guides assessment will further intensify or modify management as needed to improve upland resource conditions if deemed necessary.

Special Status Plants

Allotment #1030 Hollowfield Canyon, #1031 Shirttail Creek, and #1065 Pearce Gulch have not been surveyed for special status plants.

Portions of Allotment #1069 Sisley Creek and 1068 Morgan Mountain are known to contain populations of a BLM “Sensitive” species, *Pyrocoma radiata*, which is also listed as “endangered” in the state of Oregon, and was a former category 1 candidate species for federal

listing. The species occurs in scattered patches on all aspects, and on all topographic positions from ridgetop to draw bottoms.

Surveys for other special status plant species have not been completed. Perennial and intermittent streams may provide habitat for several BLM special status species which are generally restricted to riparian habitats.

Impacts to Special Status Plants

Alternative 1 - There would be no impacts to special status plants from livestock grazing under this alternative.

Alternative 2 - Data for impacts of grazing on *Pyrocoma radiata* populations are inconclusive. Grazing during dry conditions in summer increases utilization on this species and reduces flower and seed production. Portions of occupied habitat in swales and on gentle topography are slightly to moderately degraded, tending to be infested with cheatgrass. Steeper uplands and slopes more than 100 feet above canyon floors are often in good to excellent condition. Overall, monitoring studies show upward trends in dry rangeland habitats on Morgan Mountain allotments, indicating that present management and grazing systems should enable the species to persist over the long-term.

Those riparian habitats identified as in poor condition in the allotments will experience slower recovery over the near term and continue to offer limited capability to support populations of special status plant species until or unless utilization standards and compliance with terms and conditions of the grazing permit allow general habitat recovery.

Cultural Plant Habitat

These allotments are located within the traditional use area of the Paiute, Umatilla, Walla Walla and Cayuse tribes. Habitat for riparian berry-producing plants occurs along stream bottoms and for dry land native root plants on south trending rocky ridges in the Burnt River watershed.

Impacts to Cultural Plant Habitat

Alternative 1 - This alternative would avoid impacts of grazing on native plants.

Alternative 2 - Rotation of cattle and riparian fencing lessens impacts on native food plants, although grazing may remove distinctive root plant foliage. This area is not a regular known plant gathering site, so impacts on opportunities for harvesting native food plants are expected to be minimal.

Wildlife Habitat

The area within the boundaries of Grazing Permit #366105 contain many wildlife species including; deer, elk, chukar, Hungarian partridge, and many other species of small mammals and

birds. The allotments within the Grazing Permit are located in critical deer winter range and year-long elk range.

The streams in the area have been identified as habitat for beaver, mink and muskrat as well as habitat for many species of neotropical migratory birds including the yellow-billed cuckoo, a Bureau Sensitive Species. Management guidelines for Bureau Sensitive species (BLM Manual 6840) dictate that actions on federal lands do not contribute to the need to list wildlife species on the Endangered Species List.

Impacts to Wildlife Habitat

Alternative 1 - Immediate impacts associated with eliminating grazing on public lands would be the increase in winter forage for mule deer and elk in the area. Because of the lack of competition for winter forage, the health of the deer and elk populations in the area would increase. Eliminating grazing on public land would potentially concentrate grazing on private lands. Therefore, deer and elk would concentrate use on public lands where higher quality and quantity of winter forage would occur.

Alternative 2 - Impacts to deer and elk in the area associated with continuing the current grazing management practices would maintain the current situation. Deer and elk would continue to compete for winter and summer forage with cattle. Winter forage in the area would be maintained at its current level, with a high potential for decreasing. The status of the deer and elk populations in the area would not change unless restrictions to grazing did occur with further analysis from Rangeland Health Standards and Guides. Utilization standards should be monitored closely to maintain important winter and summer forage for wintering mule deer and management activities within the allotment should continue to minimize impacts on forage.

Fisheries

Burnt River Watershed

Powell Creek, Jordan Creek, Shirttail Creek and Swayze Creek are presumed to be fish bearing tributary streams that flow into the Burnt River. Sisley Creek is a confirmed fish bearing stream. Historically, the Burnt River system supported native runs of steelhead and chinook salmon. Construction of the dams on the Burnt River and Snake River currently prevents any passage of anadromous fish. Bull trout, historically were present in the headwaters of most forested stream systems in Northeast Oregon, but are probably extinct in the Burnt River system (Ratliff and Howell 1992).

For many years the Burnt River has been stocked with rainbow trout, especially directly below and in Unity Reservoir. Redband trout, however, is the principal native fish that exists in the Burnt River and its tributaries, especially since the tributaries have never been stocked with fish. Redband trout is listed as “sensitive” by the BLM

Presence and absence surveys have not been completed for Jordan, Powell, Shirltail, Swayze or Sisley Creek by ODFW. ODFW completed fish presence and absence surveys in 1990 on many of the reaches in the upper tributaries of the Burnt River. The survey indicates a very low number of redband trout at each surveyed area, with usually only one age class represented. Most fish were under 6 inches in length. Brook trout, sculpins and dace were also present in many of the streams. Loss of quality fish habitat and poor water quality limit the ability for fish to survive and reproduce.

A temperature study was completed by the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR, March 1999) that contains stream temperature information for the Burnt River and Powell Creek.

Continuous stream temperature monitoring was completed by the BOR in 1998 for the Burnt River. The stream temperature was recorded at several different places but the closest monitoring station was near the cement plant near Durkee, just upstream of the Jordan Creek confluence. The stream temperatures recorded for the highest 7 day max/average was 81.0 degrees F. on July 22, 1998. The Burnt River was over the 64 degree F. standard from June 13, 1998 to September 21, 1998. The Burnt River is on the DEQ 303-D list for stream temperatures, and flow modification.

Stream temperatures were measured by the BOR in 1998 in Powell Creek, once a day, periodically throughout the summer months. The highest stream temperature measured for Powell Creek was 64 degrees F. on August 4, 1998. The flow was near 2 cfs.

During the Lookout Analysis for Forest Health Sisley Creek was surveyed for stream condition using the Proper Functioning Condition protocol. Sisley Creek was identified as FAR (Functional at Risk). The trends ranged from "upward" to "downward". The Lookout Analysis proposes restoration in Sisley Creek for approximately 2.1 miles, which includes: LWD placement, hardwood planting and seeding.

Sisley Creek was monitored for stream temperature and water quality in 1998 and 1999. The 7 day max/average stream temperature for 1998 was 57.5 degrees F., and in 1999 the stream temperature was 56.5. Dissolved oxygen was low (7.6), and phosphorous was over the standard of 0.10 mg/l, with 0.75 mg/l.

Snake River Watershed

Historically the Snake River supported large runs of salmon and steelhead. Construction of the dams on the Snake River has eliminated the wild runs of anadromous fish. The upper dam Brownlee, was constructed in 1959, Oxbow in 1961 and Hells Canyon in 1968. This eliminated all natural runs of fish into the Powder River, the Burnt River and Pine Creek (Gildemeister 1992).

Heiney, Deafy Creeks are tributaries to Morgan Creek, which flows into the Snake River, into the Brownlee Pool. Heiney and Deafy are perennial streams that contribute flow to Morgan Creek, a native fish bearing stream. Heiney and Deafy may have some minor fish migration at their confluences with Morgan Creek, but good fish habitat is not available in the streams. Morgan

Creek does support fish for several miles upstream until there is blockage due to gradient and loss of pool habitat.

During the Lookout Analysis for Forest Health these streams were surveyed for stream condition using the Proper Functioning Condition protocol. Morgan Creek was PFC (Proper Functioning Condition) in the upper headwaters and the lower section above and below the road were identified as FAR (Functional at Risk). Deafy and Heiney Creeks were also identified as FAR. The trends ranged from “not apparent” in Deafy , Heiney was “downward”, to “upward” and “downward” in Morgan Creek. The Lookout Analysis proposes restoration in Morgan Creek for approximately 2.7 miles, which includes: LWD placement, hardwood planting and seeding.

Morgan Creek was monitored for stream temperature and water quality in 1999. The 7 day max/average stream temperature was 75.1 degrees F. Dissolved oxygen was low (6.8), sulfate was over the test limit of 80 mg/l, and phosphorous was over the standard of 0.10 mg/l, with over 2.75 mg/l (over test limit).

Several years ago hardwoods were planted and stream structures were built in Morgan Creek. In this area the creek is in an upward trend. Stream habitat including pools, shading and bank stability has been restored to this area. There are two exclosures on Morgan Creek and one on Heiney Creek that has promoted restoration of the stream and riparian habitat. The exclosures show potential for improvement in other areas of the creeks.

Impacts to Fisheries

All riparian areas adjacent to fish bearing streams and all riparian areas/wetlands should be managed for the desired native plant communities that best support riparian health, stream stability and the best water quality and quantity.

Alternative 1 - This alternative would eliminate any impacts to fish habitat and the riparian areas from livestock grazing.

Alternative 2 - This alternative will reissue the grazing permit for 773 AUMS from April 22 through November 30. There are no suggested changes to the current lease. The lessee should adhere to the utilization standards and moving livestock in a timely manner to minimize impacts to springs and riparian areas. It is important that there is improvement in the fish habitat and riparian areas in this allotment through range management. It will be important to maintain the 45% use on herbaceous plant species and 30% browse on shrubs to see an improvement of the riparian vegetation.

Cultural Resources/Native American Values

The allotments have not been intensively surveyed for cultural resources. Proposed ground disturbing range projects are inventoried and typically designed to avoid potential impacts to cultural resources. The route of the Oregon Trail follows an improved county road through the Sisley Creek allotment.

Impacts on Cultural/Native American Values

Alternative 1 - There would be no impacts to cultural or Native American values from livestock grazing under this alternative.

Alternative 2 - Riparian fences and rotation of cattle reduce trampling of streambanks, which avoids disturbance to areas having more likelihood for cultural occurrence. Although dispersed livestock grazing generally has little observable effect on cultural resources, livestock congregation may trample surface sites, especially near older spring developments which are not well maintained or properly functioning. Depending upon the season of use for a particular pasture, stock may congregate at or near sites proximate to water sources for short periods of time during the grazing rotation. Known sites would be monitored for such impacts. High probability riparian areas and older spring developments (for example those installed in the early 1970s) would be examined for cultural resources and proper functioning as part of the review for standards and guidelines for rangeland health. If disturbance to important sites is observed, the location would be removed from grazing or protected by exclosure fencing, salting, riding or other corrective measures such as ensuring that older range developments are properly located and maintained to achieve cultural resource objectives. Recent monitoring at Sisley Creek found no impacts to the Oregon Trail from livestock grazing.

Recreation

There are no developed recreation sites within any of these allotments. The areas within the above allotment are used for dispersed recreation with the primary recreational use being upland hunting of birds, elk and deer, stream fishing and ATV use. These activities generally take place without conflict with grazing.

Impacts on Recreation

Alternative 1 - Under this alternative, recreationists would not see cattle grazing.

Alternative 2 - The issuance of this permit is not expected to impact any of the recreational uses of the area. Conflicts between grazing and recreational use can occur with open gates or within dispersed campsites.

Socioeconomics

The Bunch Family Trust relies upon this BLM permit to keep his livestock business a viable operation as leased lands are grazed and managed in conjunction with private lands.

Impacts on Socioeconomics

Alternative 1 - Eliminating cattle from the allotment would affect the economic viability of the livestock operation because of cumulative costs associated with the permittee having to secure additional range or buy supplemental feed to accommodate herd sizes they once grazed on the above allotments. Other factors include fencing and establishing water on additional range, increased trucking costs, and labor costs associated with moving livestock. This may cause permittees to seek other private pasture or grazing lands at a considerably higher rate or may have to reduce livestock numbers therefore reducing income from their livestock operations. This may

affect the livelihoods and success of family ranch operations forcing landowners to work off ranches or possibly sell portions of their land. Changes in jobs and personal income would result in changes in the economic activity of the communities where the permittee base operations, hire employees, and buy equipment, supplies and services.

Alternative 2 - The proposed action will enable the permittee to continue his operation without adverse effects that may be caused by elimination of livestock grazing.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts of the proposed action, when considered within the larger region, or across a longer time period may occur. The most pronounced impacts would be related to continued removal of a portion of the annual palatable plant production. This may impact the numbers of wildlife species that can survive in the region which rely on the forage, seeds, or cover that the palatable plants provide. A second impact may be to the frequency and size of fires that occurs in the region. Continued removal of the fine fuels could reduce the fire size and frequency, and promote the dominance by woody species, which may be detrimental to the herbaceous species and wildlife species that are associated with their presence however could enhance habitat for woody dependent wildlife species. Managed grazing that allows rest during some periods throughout the grazing season, and provides for good livestock distribution may limit adverse cumulative impacts to soils, vegetation, water resources, wildlife and fisheries from grazing.

Mitigation

Salt blocks will be placed on upper extent of benches, as far away as is practical from streams or water developments to allow for better livestock distribution during the grazing season.

No more than 45% use of current year's growth shall occur on riparian grass and forb species.

No more than 30% use of current year's growth shall occur on riparian shrub species.

Utilization on upland grass species shall not exceed an average of 50% use.

Two growing seasons rest will be required for areas that receive vegetation treatments or wildland fire events.

The BLM range conservationist will work with the Permittee to find opportunities to allow portions of the allotment to receive occasional rest in order to increase plant vigor and/or to allow fine fuels to accumulate to help natural burns to perpetuate the desired landscape mosaic.

If human remains or historic, archaeological, or paleontological materials are found in the course of any allotment activities, the operator shall refrain from further activities that might impact the materials and contact the BLM.

Contact the BLM prior to any rangeland maintenance activity which would require soil surface disturbing activities.

Grazing will be done in a manner that does not encourage the establishment or spread of noxious weeds, or significant degradation of the native plant community. Use of chemical or biological methods of control for noxious weed treatment is prohibited unless prior approval is obtained from the Authorized Officer and an approved Pesticide/Biological Use Proposal is submitted.

Submission of actual use reports are required within 15 days after the end of the grazing season.

Grazing management changes will take place as needed to comply with Rangeland Health Standards and Guides Assessment

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring would be done each year according to the Oregon/Washington Monitoring Plan to ensure compliance with the grazing management plans. This monitoring is essential to evaluate the condition of resource values in the case of needed changes in the grazing management.

A Rangeland Health assessment addressing the five Rangeland Standards will be conducted in a separate document. Other evaluations of the allotment use and resource values would be conducted, as needed, after reviewing the monitoring data.

Other Resource Elements Analyzed

Environmental Justice: No disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on minority or low-income populations are expected to result from implementation of any of the alternatives addressed in this EA.

The following resources were all considered in preparation of the EA and are either not present or would not be affected by the proposed action or alternative:

<u>CRITICAL ELEMENTS</u>	<u>AFFECTED</u>	
	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
ACEC/WILDERNESS		X
CULT.RES.&NAT.REG.HIST.PLACES		X
FARMLANDS, PRIME/UNIQUE		X
NAT.AMER.REL.CONCERNS		X
WASTES, HAZARDOUS/SOLID		X
WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS		X

Consultation and Coordination

Rod and Rhea Bunch
Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
Nez Perce Tribe

Interdisciplinary Analysis: Identify those team members conducting or participating in the NEPA analysis.

Name	Title
Rubel Vigil	Supervisory Natural Resource Specialist
Greg Miller	Wildlife Biologist
Clair Button	Botanist
Mary Oman	Archeologist
Kevin McCoy	Recreation/Wilderness Specialist
Mike Woods	Fire/Weeds Specialist
Teresa Smergut	Rangeland Management Specialist
Jackie Dougan	Fisheries Biologist
Todd Kuck	Hydrologist

APPENDIX

Redband Trout Life History Characteristics

The entire group of redband/rainbow trout have been recently classified into the rainbow grouping Oncorhynchus mykiss gibbsi. Redband/rainbow trout is the interior (inland) rainbow trout which can be differentiated from the coastal rainbow both electrophoretically and by meristic character differences such as the very fine scales and extra row of teeth on the tongue. The redband/rainbow's coloration is highly variable, most often there is a brick red coloring around the lateral line and dark colored parr marks (spots). The rainbow trout has a rainbow color around the lateral line and light colored parr marks. Spawning behavior appears to be most similar to that of rainbow and golden trout. All are spring spawners and require gravel riffles in which the female excavates a redd. Redband/rainbow trout have been listed as a sensitive species because their populations have diminished from historical levels.

Redband/rainbow are similar to brook trout (Salvelinus fontinalis) in that both are assumed to require relatively the same food, space, cover, and individual territories that are afforded by the riffles and small pools of headwater streams (Bacon et al. 1980). The redband/rainbow appears to tolerate higher siltation conditions and select lower water velocity situations than typical for most trout.

The redband/rainbow trout appear to be more tolerant of high water temperatures than other salmonids. Some redband/rainbow populations in the desert basins of southeast Oregon have adapted to very high water temperatures through a survival mechanism and are known to inhabit intermittent, stagnant streams with temperatures as high as 83 degrees F. (Behnke 1979).

They once inhabited the entire upper Columbia River system, areas of British Columbia and Northern California (Lusch 1985). Behnke (1979) suggests that the redband/rainbow trout was originally native throughout the interior reaches of the Columbia River basin except where blocked by major falls, to lakes existing in the present Oregon basins.

Introductions of hatchery rainbow trout and subsequent hybridization have largely eliminated pure redband trout populations in most of their original range (Bacon, Brouha, Rode, Staley 1980). Now the redband/rainbow is found only in isolated sections of their historical habitat.

Currens (1991) looked at the genetic variation within and among populations of redband/rainbow trout in the Burnt and Powder Rivers. The population from the Burnt River system showed consistent genetic characteristics of inland redband/rainbow trout of the Columbia and Snake River. There were local population differences among the two populations tested in the Burnt River. Currens (1991) concluded that the Burnt River populations are inland redband/rainbow trout.

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The environmental assessment, analyzing the environmental effects of the proposed action, has been reviewed. The approved mitigation measures result in a finding of no significant impact on the human environment. Therefore, an environmental impact statement is not necessary to further analyze the environmental effects of the proposed action.

DECISION AND RATIONALE: It is my decision to select the Proposed Action alternative and approve the renewal of the grazing permit for the Bunch Family Trust for a term of 10 years. Allotments and grazing schedules are defined in the following table.

Allotment Name	Allotment Number	Season of Use	Active Preference (AUMs)	Category*	Total BLM Acres
Hollowfield Canyon	#1030	6/22-8/21	42	M	301
Shirttail Creek	#1031	4/22-5/21 10/15-11/14	76	I	806
Pearce Gulch	#1065	10/1-12/31	6	C	63
Morgan Mtn	#1068	10/1-11/23	194	I	5,117
Sisley Creek	#1069	4/27-6/15 10/1-11/30	455	I	5,467

This decision is subject to the Terms and Conditions identified in the mitigation measures described below.

MITIGATION MEASURES:

Salt blocks will be placed on upper extent of benches, as far away as is practical from streams or water developments to allow for better livestock distribution during the grazing season.

No more than 45% use of current year's growth shall occur on riparian grass and forb species.

No more than 30% use of current year's growth shall occur on riparian shrub species.

Utilization on upland grass species shall not exceed an average of 50% use.

Two growing seasons rest will be required for areas that receive vegetation treatments or wildland fire events.

The BLM range conservationist will work with the Permittee to find opportunities to allow portions of the allotment to receive occasional rest in order to increase plant vigor and/or to allow fine fuels to accumulate to help natural burns to perpetuate the desired landscape mosaic.

If human remains or historic, archaeological, or paleontological materials are found in the course of any allotment activities, the operator shall refrain from further activities that might impact the materials and contact the BLM.

Contact the BLM prior to any rangeland maintenance activity which would require soil surface disturbing activities.

Grazing will be done in a manner that does not encourage the establishment or spread of noxious weeds, or significant degradation of the native plant community. You are not authorized to use chemical nor biological methods of control unless you have received prior approval from the Authorized Officer and have an approved Pesticide/Biological Use Proposal.

Submission of actual use reports are required within 15 days after the end of the grazing season.

Grazing management changes will take place as needed to comply with Rangeland Health Standards and Guides Assessment

COMPLIANCE PLAN: Compliance with the renewed grazing lease and its associated terms and conditions will be accomplished through the Baker Field Office Range Management Program. Use supervision checks by the range staff and other office personnel as appropriate will be used to assure compliance. The Baker Resource Area Range Monitoring Plan and the Oregon State Rangeland Monitoring Handbook will be used to schedule periodic utilization checks, collect trend data, and evaluate allotments. Evaluation of monitoring data would be used to make appropriate changes to the grazing lease as needed to promote rangeland health.

SIGNATURE OF AUTHORIZED OFFICIAL:

DATE SIGNED:











